

combe Bay which is otherwise in Cumbria, a typical univoltine race of large individuals flies from mid-June through July, but at least in warm summers a very limited emergence of much smaller individuals appears at the end of August and the beginning of September. This may also occur occasionally on other adjacent limestone hills, but while I was Vicar of Hutton Roof from 1951-1962 I never saw a specimen on Hutton Roof Crag which could be assigned to a second brood. Only about 8 miles further inland from Warton Crag the species was apparently strictly univoltine. Conversely, at Grune Point north of Silloth where there is the usual coastal bivoltine race I have on rare occasions seen one or two large specimens in July which would from the time of emergence and from their appearance seem to be individuals of an univoltine race.

The whole question seems to be an intriguing one. The two races appear to have mixed in just one or two places, but normally they cannot do so because of the different times of emergence. And their appearance remains distinct. If in captivity specimens of the bivoltine race were artificially induced to emerge later than in the wild so that they could be paired with univoltines, would there be any sign of incipient genetic imbalance such as that which conclusively separated the two *Ariciae*? — The Reverend J. H. VINE HALL, 3 The Green, Melmerby, Penrith, Cumbria CA101HE.

PHYLLONORYCTER CORYLIFOLIELLA HBN. F. BETULAE Z.: NEW TO ESSEX. — During October 1983, Mr. C. Smith and I discovered the mines of *Phyllonorycter corylifoliella* f. *betulae* on the upper surfaces of several leaves on a single sapling silver birch tree (*Betula pendula*) at St. Mary Magdalene Churchyard, Museum Nature Reserve, East Ham, Essex, (grid ref.: TQ 4282). This identification was subsequently confirmed by Maitland Emmet to whom I am most grateful. Form *betulae* has a northern and western distribution in Britain, and because of this apparent geographical restriction, coupled with the fact that it is univoltine (the typical form being bivoltine), some entomologists regard it as a distinct species. Two tenanted mines were collected and freeze-dried for this Museum's collections. It will be most interesting to see whether this moth manages to spread to the only other silver birch tree at the Nature Reserve — that which was planted by Her Majesty The Queen to commemorate her visit here on 14th December, 1983! — C. W. PLANT, Assistant Curator, Natural Sciences (Biology), Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, Stratford, London E15 4LZ.

PINE LADYBIRDS ON A LIME TREE. — While visiting the open parkland of Bromley Library Gardens on 23 October 1983, I was surprised to find a lime tree attracting a number of ladybird species, two of which are normally associated with pine trees.

Since it was first discovered in this country by Morley in 1939 (Morley, *Trans. Suff. Nat. Soc.* (1941), 4: 247-248), *Harmonia quadripunctata* Pontoppidan has spread throughout England and is

now quite widespread and common on pine, larch, spruce, fir etc. On this occasion, there were seven specimens actively crawling about the lime trunk. *Aphidecta obliterated* L. is another ladybird usually associated with fir trees, yet on this tree trunk there were three specimens. The other ladybird species present were *Coccinella septempunctata* L. — two specimens —, *Adalia bipunctata* L., *Thea vigintiduopunctata* L. and *Propylea quattuordecimpunctata* L. — one specimen of each.

The particular lime tree in question was one of a group of seven trees (a cherry, a hawthorn, a birch and three planes being the others) and yet was the only tree trunk to be attracting insects. Apart from the ladybirds there were a bug, a crane fly and several spiders. It was about two feet in diameter and was very much the same size as the birch and the planes. It was not particularly lichen-covered, or the most sunned. Why the lime tree should be the most attractive to these species is very intriguing. The only explanation I can offer is that the rough bark of the lime offered more crevices suitable for hibernation and concealment. — RICHARD JONES, 29 Dean Road, Willesden Green, London NW2.

A LARVAL HABITAT OF THE WHITE AND BUFF ERMINE MOTHS (*SPILOSOMA MENTHASTRI* ESP. AND *S. LUTEA* HUFN.). — The standard works are remarkably vague, and even erroneous, regarding the larval foodplants of these fairly common and conspicuous larvae. Thus for *S. menthastri*, South (*Moths of the British Isles*), writes that the caterpillars feed on low-growing plants and do not appear specially attached to any particular kind; while in the *Butterflies and Moths of Great Britain and Ireland* (ed. J. Heath), the species is stated to be polyphagous on herbaceous plants without showing particular preference! Surprisingly, though perhaps it is not a coincidence, Barrett (*Lepidoptera of the British Islands*) has only 'all sorts of low growing plants'. Similar unhelpful comments on *S. lutea* appear in all three works. The fact is, so far as S. E. England is concerned, and I suspect elsewhere in Britain, the caterpillars of both species exhibit decided preferences. I have obtained them most readily by finding walls, railings, fences, steep banks or hedges heavily festooned with certain climbing plants, especially *Clematis vitalba*, hop (*Humulus lupulus*), Virginian creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis* and *Calystegia sepium*), Russian Vine (*Fallopia aubertii*), plus elder (*Sambucus nigra*) which is often found in association with these plants. When these are shaken vigorously, the caterpillars come tumbling down, together with those of *Diataraxia oleracea* L. and *Melanchra persicariae* L. However, neither *menthastri* nor *lutea* larvae appear to be as common to-day as they were between the wars and in the immediate post-War period.

The first attempt at specifying the larval foodplants of these species seems to have been made by Chalmers-Hunt (*Lepidoptera*